



DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Policy No.: DOC 5.1.5.	Subject: OFFENDER COMMUNITY PRESENTATIONS
Chapter 5: OFFENDER PROGRAMS	Page 1 of 6, + 1 attachment
Section 1: Work Programs	Revision Date:
Signature: /s/ Bill Slaughter	Effective Date: December 20, 2001

I. POLICY:

It is the policy of the Department of Corrections to establish guidelines for secured facilities regarding offender presentations in the community.

II. IMPLEMENTATION:

This policy was implemented on the effective date.

III. AUTHORITY:

2-15-112, MCA, Duties and Powers of Department Heads

53-1-203, MCA, Powers and Duties of Department of Corrections

DOC Policy 3.1.12, Escorted Trips

IV. DEFINITIONS:

Offender Community Presentations mean programs that allow eligible offenders to leave the confines of an assigned facility/program, under supervision, for the purpose of assuming increased personal responsibility, skills and development through community presentations. These programs are intended to be a benefit to the community.

Public Information Officer (PIO) means a facility/program, or Department spokesperson, that has been designated to disseminate timely information to the public regarding its operations.

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Secured Facilities, for the purpose of this policy, means high and low security facilities, used by the Department for the confinement, custody, or care of offenders committed to its custody.

Victim Information and Notification Everyday (VINE) means the free 24-hour automated telecommunications system of the state of Montana designed to receive and transmit telephone calls and provide movement information on adult offenders for the purpose of notifying victims.

Victim Information Officer (VIO) means a staff person from a facility/program, or the Department, charged with providing informational and advocacy services to victims.

V. PROCEDURES

The Department recognizes the importance of good community relationships, and supports the efforts to maximize these relationship whenever possible. Offenders have experienced incarceration, and have been exposed to various treatment programs. These experiences often result in selected offenders being viable resources to provide information and assistance to public service programs, such as drug awareness and crime prevention projects. The opportunity for offenders to share their experiences may be an effective and constructive tool in providing an open and honest exchange of information with the public.

The Department also recognizes that each facility has its own goals and objectives directed at meeting the facility and Department Mission. Each Warden or Superintendent desiring to have offenders participate in community offender presentations will develop or have in place specific procedures to address the development of a community presentation program. The following areas must be addressed in accordance with the custody and security level of each facility and the offenders within that facility:

- a method of screening and validating request(s) for presentation
- screening, selection, and orientation of the offender
- staff selection and orientation
- method of victim notification when appropriate
- develop a form specific to the security level of the facility, to include all pertinent information regarding the presentation, offender and staff providing the escort

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- notification of law enforcement
- guidelines for supervision during community presentations

Examples of community presentations may include, but are not limited to:

- public and private schools
- universities/colleges and trade schools
- addictive disease programs
- nursing homes and hospitals
- church organization
- civic organizations

A. Screening and Validation of Request for Presentations

1. Requests for presentations will be directed to the Warden/Superintendent, or designee.
The request may be received orally or in written form.
2. The designated staff member will evaluate each request. Based on the mission and goals of the facility, the benefits to the individual or organization(s) making the request(s), and those of the facility and offender, the designated staff member will approve or disapprove each request.
3. The designated staff member will complete the necessary facility documentation necessary for the approval of the presentation and selection of the offender.

B. Offender Screening, Selection and Orientation

Each facility will have a process for screening offenders being considered for the Community Presentation Program. The screening process must take into consideration the offenders custody classification, behavior and adjustment to rules and authority, commitment to change, and that they have accepted accountability and responsibility for their crime(s). Other factors such as detainers, pending court appeals, work reports, sex offenses etc. may need to be considered when screening

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offenders. A major emphasis must be placed on public and staff safety, the understanding of the visibility of the offender in the community and the potential negative repercussions and security problems of negative behaviors.

1. The nature and severity of the offender's crime will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. When making recommendations for an offender to participate in these programs, staff must give major consideration to the offender's criminal history. Offenders who have committed serious and/or violent crimes that have resulted in significant notoriety may not be appropriate for this program. Participation for any offender will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

C. Orientation:

The Warden or Superintendent or designee will ensure that appropriate advice and assistance is given to those offenders approved to participate in community presentations. No offender will be allowed to participate until they have met with a designated staff member who is responsible to counsel and advise the offender on all expectations and requirements for participation in the program. It is particularly important in the case of offenders who have served longer sentences and may be out of touch with community attitudes, customs and styles. There are a number of strategies that will be employed in implementing the orientation:

1. A designated staff person will discuss the program with the offender(s) emphasizing the nature of the presentation, the importance of proper behavior and the ramifications of failure to comply with all expectations.
2. Members of the sponsoring group may be invited to attend the offender's orientation sessions.
3. A "debriefing" session may be held after a community presentation if the staff member or the supervisor feels it is warranted.

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D. Victim Notification

In instances where the victim has submitted a written request to be provided information/notice pursuant to 46.24.212 MCA, the PIO/VIO will notify the victim and/or victim's family. The PIO/VIO will inform the victim of the offender's eligibility for the community presentation program and level of supervision. If the victim objects to the offender's participation in the proposed program, the request must be forwarded to the Director/Division Administrator for final disposition in consultation with the Warden/Superintendent/Facility Administrator.

E. Staff qualification and selection

The Warden/Superintendent, or designee, will ensure that the Community Presentations Program is discussed with all involved staff. (The intent of these meetings is to ensure that each staff member involved is supportive of the program and that they do everything possible to make the community presentation program a success.)

F. Notification of law enforcement

Before a community presentation is scheduled, a designated staff person must send a letter to the Chief of Police and/or the Sheriff of the jurisdiction informing them of the following information:

- a. date
- b. time
- c. place
- d. type of activity
- e. offenders and/or groups involved
- f. transportation arrangements
- g. supervision and security measures in place

Any changes in dates, times or schedules must be provided in advance to all involved parties, to include victims (if necessary) and local law enforcement.

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G. Supervision During Community Presentations:

1. Supervision and transportation of offenders will be in compliance with Department Policy 3.1.12, Escorted Trips.
2. When overnight accommodations are required, all participants will be housed in facilities operated by the Department, or a local detention facility.
3. Employees accompanying offenders must conduct themselves in an exemplary manner. Under every circumstance, staff must conduct themselves in a manner that supports staff/offender/public relationships, and that encourages public trust.
4. Personnel must not fraternize with offenders.
5. Personnel must not provide any favors or preferential treatment to any offender, family or agent of the offender except as authorized in the official performance of duties.
6. The use of alcoholic beverages, or non-prescribed drugs, by offenders or staff is strictly prohibited.
7. Trips for offenders, other than those to state facilities, may require the requesting agency to pay for the cost of offender meals.
8. Meals not taken at state facilities will be eaten in vehicles at drive-in restaurants unless the location, time, or circumstances of the presentation make this impractical.
9. The Warden/Superintendent or designee must approve any known exceptions to the meal policy in advance and in writing.

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Any circumstance that arises during a trip that results in exceptions to this or any other Department or facility policy will be reported as soon as possible to the facility administrator or designee.

VI. CLOSING:

Questions concerning this policy should be directed to the Warden/Superintendent.